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OCTOBER

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COVER: The red-tailed hawk is one of the most familiar birds of prey, often seen soaring lazily overhead on a breezy day or perched motionless on a snag, its keen eyes scanning the surrounding land. Our artist: William D. Rodgers, Jr., De Land, Florida.

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Why Do We Hunt?

AUTUMN is here in all its glory. The land casts off its working clothes of summer green, and adorns itself in festive raiment reserved exclusively for harvest time. Along the country road, the woodland trail, the winding lane, one walks in beauty. Last spring's fawn has lost its spots. Birds of the year are strong of wing, and one can hear wild geese. It is the time of the hunters' moon. The outdoors beckons as at no other season, and behind even familiar walls one feels imprisoned.

Why does one now so eagerly take gun in hand and head for woods or fields or marshes in search of game? Why, indeed!

Hunting is, of course, a reenactment of one of man's earliest methods of gathering food, but, in our own country at least, modern food production and marketing systems have long since eliminated the need for hunting as a means of survival. Yet hunting remains very much a part of our culture.

Once strenuous physical competition, not between armies of selected specialists but between individuals or family group "teams," was a social and economic fact of life, and skill in such competition came to be a highly regarded attribute. As physical combat was displaced by gentler forms of competition for the means of subsistence, the tradition was preserved in highly stylized and ritualistic form in athletic sports, closely circumscribed by ethics, rules, and codes of conduct, observance of which became the foundation of the concept of sportsmanship.

Likewise, a no-holds-barred, no-quarter-given physical combat between men and beasts was once an economic fact of life and survival depended upon the outcome. Undoubtedly the meeting of this challenge was exhilarating, and skill in meeting it came to be diligently sought and greatly admired. The tradition is preserved in hunting for sport rather than for meat for survival, and sportsmanship in the field, as in athletic sports, now depends upon adherence to rigid rules and codes of conduct which refine the manner of exercising the hunting instinct and add to the quality and benefits derived from the experience. Just as football is an improvement over battle, so hunting for sport is greatly superior to hunting for food, for the sportsman must live up to a code, largely self-imposed, which severely limits permissible means of achieving success in bringing his quarry to bag, thus putting greater emphasis on skill than on "kill," and adding a strong element of discipline to the exercise of the hunting instinct as well.

Aldo Leopold once commented that the hope, which is sometimes expressed, that all these instincts will be "outgrown" overlooks the fact that the resulting vacuum will fill up with something, and not necessarily with something better. Indeed, what does replace the instincts that now find their outlet in outdoor sports, when these instincts are "outgrown" or repressed? An instinct to riot in the streets, perhaps?

Why do people still enjoy hunting?

Partly, perhaps, for the same reasons that people enjoy football.

Partly, perhaps, because they need to escape for a little while from a desk, a machine, or crowds and pressures which become unbearable.

And partly because, when the seasons change and autumn's splendor lies upon the land, when the air is cleansed and fresh and crisp, and the outdoors beckons as at no other season, then behind familiar walls one feels imprisoned, and one wants to walk in beauty, and going hunting is partly just an excuse.—J. F. Mc

WARN

ATTACHED is a reprint of an editorial published recently in the *Defenders of Wildlife NEWS*. Referring to what is characterized as, "... a bold, dynamic approach to stopping the sacrifice of wildlife species on the altar of vanity," the writer states: "It is hoped that all conservation-minded organizations will join in support of FRIENDS of AFRICA in AMERICA to make this vision become a reality." The reference is to a project "Women Against Ravishment of Nature (WARN)," an article on which appeared in the previous issue of the *NEWS*.

WARN calls for sending to Africa a mission of 20 non-professional photographers, who pay their share of briefing in the field, so they may then authoritatively engage in educational endeavor in the U. S., aimed at more responsible attitudes on the part of women of fashion.

We are asking organizations, such as yours, to be among those who join in the suggested moral support. Qualified prospects, who would consider themselves fortunate to be one of the mission, are scattered across America. Doubtless among the people of your state are eligible individuals who would be interested. Will you be good enough to call their attention to the proposed program?

We do not ask that you endorse us or the endeavor, but merely that you give the people of your state opportunity for enquiry.

The threat to endangered wildlife is intensified by women's fashions. There is a need for thoughtful women to launch an educational campaign generating moral sanctions against adornment with trophies of endangered species, some of the hardest pressed and loveliest of which are at bay in East Africa.

Clement E. Merowit

For FRIENDS of AFRICA in AMERICA

330 South Broadway

Tarrytown, New York 10591

Announcement accompanying above correspondence indicated first WARN mission, comprised of 20 women (a few men may be accepted), will leave New York January 22nd and return February 12th. A second, consisting of 20 students (ages 16-22), departs July 30th and returns August 20th. Participants will be accompanied on safaris by an audio-visual expert and conservationist, well acquainted with the area.—Ed.

Correction

IN the article that I assembled and published in the September 1969 issue of *Virginia Wildlife* on Dismal Swamp insects there is an error of some moment that I hope you will call to the attention of your readers.

Six paragraphs, starting with the next to the last on page 15 which begins with "The interior of the Swamp is relatively barren," through the paragraph on page 16 ending "beyond the Mississippi" should all be in quotation marks. The error resulted from the way the manuscript was set up and from no fault of the editor.

Also, some confusion might result from the fact that the Diana butterfly has at times been assigned to at least three different genera, and we used two of them—*Speyeria* and *Argynnis*.

J. T. Baldwin, Jr.
Williamsburg



HUNTERS' LONGEST SEASON

By BOB GOOCH
Troy

IT'S highly possible that squirrel hunting got its start in the Old Dominion. And it is just as likely that first pioneer sharpshooter downed a frisky gray, the popular bushy-tail—the peanut crunchers that entertain the lunch hour crowd at the State Capitol. For it is the gray, adaptable though he is, that prefers the dense forests such as Captain John Smith and his little band discovered over 300 years ago.

The fox squirrel, less abundant in Virginia, is an inhabitant of the edges, swamps and fence rows. The little red squirrel of our coniferous forests is not considered a game animal.

Early settlers found an abundance of squirrels in the new land, and bushytails quickly won their favor. In fact it was the demand for a good squirrel piece that later brought forth the famous Kentucky Rifle.

Boasting a 300 year history, it is no wonder squirrel hunting remains popular and steeped in customs and traditions difficult to change.

Because of the combination of legislative acts which open squirrel hunting as early as September 1 in certain counties, and sound game management that permits hunting through January, the Old Dominion squirrel hunter enjoys the longest public hunting season in the state. His shots kick off the new hunting year, and when he racks his gun at the end of January, five long months of hunting have run off the calendar.

But Virginia is not alone. Some states open their squirrel seasons as early as May 1, and others close them as late as February 28. A few states such as Arkansas and Texas are experimenting with special spring seasons—wedging some hunting between the winter and summer breeding

periods. Squirrels produce two litters a year. Missouri, one of the top squirrel states, opens its season May 30 and continues it through December!

Five Virginia counties open their squirrel woods September 1 and, in so doing, initiate the new hunting year. Three of these counties, Brunswick, Greensville and Southampton, are in the southeastern part of the state, and on the North Carolina border. The other two, Greene and Madison, are mountain counties in the rugged foothills of the Blue Ridge. Established by the General Assembly, these seasons are outside the jurisdiction of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. They can be closed only by legislative action. In real squirrel country, few legislators are willing to risk such a move.

Early squirrel seasons are popular because this is the most productive time of the year to hunt bushytail. For it is in late August and early September that nuts swell to full size and the corn ripens. This is squirrel “cutting time” and the provident bushytail is busy in the nut trees or along the edges of corn fields, feasting on the new crops and harvesting for the long winter.

Generations of Virginians have thrilled to this kind of hunting. Many aging nimrods have fond memories of early morning vigils in September squirrel woods—usually near a big hickory tree laden with a crop of nuts. It's a sport enjoyed by the young and old alike.

Those who oppose the early hunting, feel the season falls too soon after the summer brood is born. It exposes the females while the young are still nursing. They also object to the waste of a resource that results from squirrels containing botflies or “wolves” being discarded by the hunter who finds these parasites repulsive. While the botflies do not affect the food value of the game, even those who realize this are somewhat squeamish about eating it. A botfly infested squirrel is not a pretty sight.

There are certain discomforts associated with summer hunting. September weather can be uncomfortably hot. Mosquitoes and tiny black gnats can make sitting quietly a real challenge. And ticks and chiggers are very much in evidence. Worst of all it's the season for the tiny seed ticks that hang in clusters on blades of grass. The hunter who brushes against such a cluster may find himself covered with hundreds of the tiny pests.

Hunting the gray squirrel in its favorite habitat, oak-hickory woodlands.



Mosquito dope will deal with the mosquitoes and gnats, but the ticks and chiggers are more difficult to cope with. Tick repellent sprinkled liberally over the shoes, socks and trousers helps, but it is far from foolproof. It is best to try avoiding the ticks. They are usually most abundant along grassy trails and paths. The hunter is better off if he stays off the beaten path. Chiggers like dead and rotting wood. While downed timber beckons to the hunter looking for a woodland seat, he should avoid it in summer.

Another disadvantage of summer hunting is the heavy foliage that makes locating game difficult. Veteran hunters listen for falling nut fragments dropped by feeding squirrels, and watch for the movement of leafy branches to telegraph the location of moving game. It doesn't take much practice to distinguish between the motion caused by a raiding squirrel and the action of the wind. Tree branches give under the weight of a squirrel, and the movement is mostly vertical.

Hunting in the first five counties ends by mid-September, but before the echoes from the final shots fade out, a number of other Old Dominion counties get into the squirrel hunting act. Campbell, Carroll, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania commence month long seasons on September 15, while Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe open their woods for two weeks of hunting. September hunting in these counties is limited to private lands.

The summer born are two weeks older now, and better able to shift for themselves. Botflies are beginning to disappear. Mosquitoes, ticks and chiggers are still active, though they too begin to thin out. The days become shorter and the nights much cooler toward the end of September. The fall foliage starts to take on color, and all in all late September is a better season to be in the woods.

October is the month in which many states open their squirrel seasons. It's the season generally acceptable to game managers, and one most hunters prefer. They like the woods in October. Squirrels are still swishing through the treetops for nuts, and raiding late standing corn, though neither are as plentiful as they were in September. The days are still warm and squirrels are active by dawn and



Ill. Dept. of Conservation photo
Summer foliage makes it difficult to locate squirrels during September seasons.

feeding in late afternoon. Taking a stand at a hickory tree can still be productive, though the game is more likely to be scattered out in the woods in search of fallen nuts and other food.

Insects, ticks and botflies are seldom a problem in October, and it is a delightful season to be in the fields and woods.

Accomack, Bedford, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Halifax, Isle of Wight, Loudoun, Mecklenburg, Nansemond, Northampton, Page, Prince William and Rapahannock Counties open their two weeks seasons on October 1. So do Chesapeake City and the Quantico Marine Base. Add to these the several counties with one month seasons beginning September 15, and we get a lot of October squirrel hunting for the Old Dominion hunter.

A huge block of counties in the central part of the state have no early seasons, limiting their squirrel hunting to the November to January period. It is interesting to note that these counties represent what was once the top turkey country in Virginia. Some once observed early squirrel hunting, but discontinued it because of concern for their turkey flocks. Many turkey hunters insisted that squirrel hunters were pot shooting their prized turkeys before the turkey season opened.

(Continued on page 20)

Squirrel hunting can be a real challenge to the bowhunter.



"Cuttings," a sure sign of squirrels.



Late Returns From Black Bear Tagging Study

By MAX CARPENTER
Game Biologist

A BLACK bear tagging study in the mountains of Virginia was made by Al Stickley from 1958 to 1960 as part of a research project to determine to what degree the population was being reduced by legal harvest. Since 1960 returns from tagged bear have continued to accrue, adding interesting data on longevity and movements to that recorded during the original study period.

An old sow killed in 1967 was 11½ years old, had worn her tag for 8 years, and was reported by the hunter who killed her to have had three cubs with her.

Longevity of Bears Harvested

Year of harvest	Number harvested		Estimated age when tagged	Years tagged	Age when harvested
	Male	Female			
1961	6	1	1½	2	3½
		1	3½	2	5½
		1	3½	3	6½
1963	1		2½	3	5½
1964	1	1	2½	6	8½
1967		1	3½	8	11½

Of the twenty bears whose tags have been returned since 1960, ages were recorded at time of tagging for only the thirteen shown in the table on longevity.

Ages were estimated at time of tagging by tooth wear and body weight. The unworn teeth of a cub were used to compare with those of tagged bears to determine tooth wear. Yearlings were considered to be those bears with little molar wear apparent and with weights of less than 90 pounds for females and less than 100 pounds for males.

Male bears that manage to survive several hunting seasons do considerable traveling—more than was previously thought. Most females are more sedentary than males. The old 11½ year old sow killed in 1967 was shot only a mile from where she had been trapped and tagged, while a 2½-year old male tagged at Big Levels in Augusta County was killed the following fall 25 miles southwest of Richmond

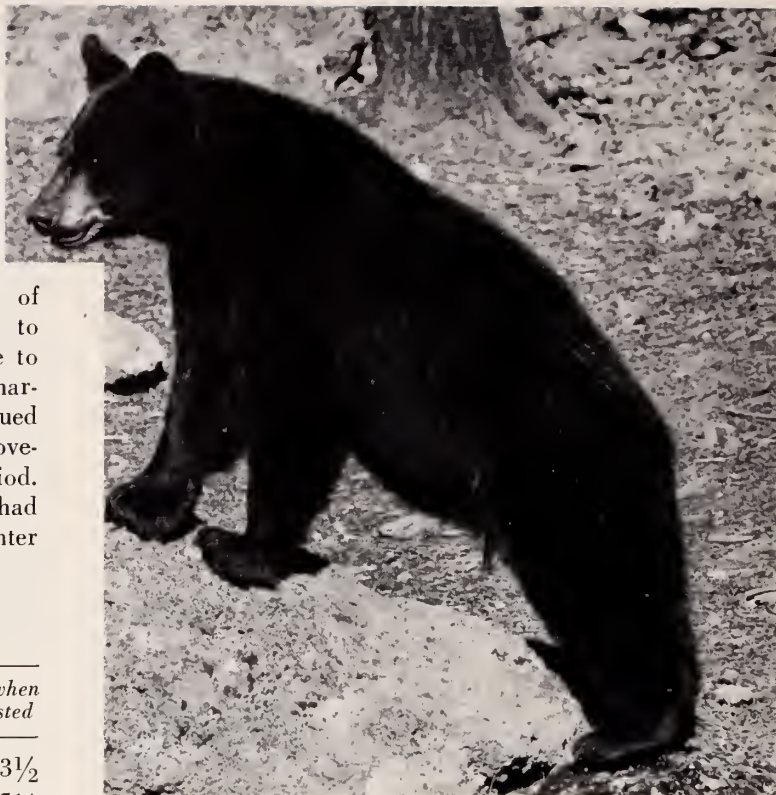


Photo by L. L. Rue, III

in Amelia County, a distance of 90 miles (the first recorded bear kill in that county in modern times). A male and female each tagged for six years reversed the usual pattern, the male being shot only a few miles from where he had been trapped while the female had moved 27 miles.

Stickley noted that males moved about much more than females and that yearling males moved nearly as far as adult males. Twenty-one male bears harvested the fall after tagging had moved an average of 10 miles; seven females, an average of 1.8 miles. Since 1960, seven male bears tagged for two years were harvested an average of 3.4 miles from where trapped, and three females were shot an average of 3 miles from where trapped. Three males harvested three years after tagging had traveled an average of 32.7 miles. While no returns came from females that had been tagged for three years, one female was harvested a mile from her trap site four years after tagging.

The greatest distance traveled by a bear killed after 1960 was 53 miles, recorded for a male. A bear trapped

Left: Applying anesthetic to a trapped bear. Weights and measurements were recorded while bears slept.

Commission photos by Harrison





Commission photo by Harrison

Sleeping it off. This ear-tagged bear was soon up and away.

before this study was begun and moved to an entirely new territory returned 97 miles to its home range within three years!

The sex ratio in the harvest the first year slightly favored the females, but this was reversed the next two years with big drops recorded in the female kills and with a preponderance of males in the harvest. Mortality of tagged bears was high the first year, with percentages of tagged bears shot each year thereafter showing a steady decline. Adults were as readily taken as yearlings, with 33% mortality observed in both age classes.

During the first summer of trapping (1958), 16 males and 9 females were tagged. That fall, six males and four females were harvested. The next year, 19 males and 17 females were tagged. During the hunting season that year,

11 males and one female were harvested. During the last trapping year (1960), 10 males and 11 females were tagged. That fall, four males and one female were harvested. After three summers of tagging and harvesting, then, 21 of 45 tagged males had been shot while only six of the 37 females had been accounted for.

Total recoveries from 1958 to 1968 show that of 45 tagged males, 33 (73%) have been harvested, while only 14 (37%) of the 37 tagged females have been taken by hunters. Tagged males thus have continued to be more vulnerable to the gun. While statewide checking station data confirm that males are indeed somewhat more vulnerable than females, the extent of the difference is not nearly so great among untagged bears as with this particular group of tagged animals. It has been suggested that males are more vulnerable because, being greater travelers, they leave more trail to be picked up and followed by hounds. This factor should not have affected the tagged bears to a greater extent than the rest of the population. It has also been suggested that under some conditions female bears tend to den earlier than males. If so, then it may be possible that local weather and other conditions affecting the home ranges of these particular bears have caused the female portion of the tagged bear population to den earlier than is generally customary for bears throughout the state, thus reducing their vulnerability to hunting. No fully satisfactory explanation can be derived from available data. Are female bears smarter than males, and thus able to "learn" a greater wariness of man as a result of a single trapping and tagging experience? We doubt it. The answer will have to await the gathering of a great deal more knowledge of bear behavior.

Sex Ratio of Bears Harvested from Statewide Checking Station Records

Year	1964	1965	1966	1967
Male	151	125	68	176
Female	105	112	54	166
TOTAL	256	237	122	342
Percent males	58	52	55	51
Percent females	41	47	44	48

A number of tagged bear are possibly still alive, since 35 have not been reported. If so, they are becoming real patriarchs and matriarchs among the bear clan. Any further returns from these 35 bruins will give us added information concerning bear longevity, and possibly tell something about age as it relates to physical condition among bears, but it is doubtful if they can change the patterns of mobility and vulnerability that have emerged already.

Biologists worked quickly to complete their examinations and apply ear tags while bears slept.

Commission photos by Harrison



Let's Cook Woodcock

By MARJORIE LATHAM MASSELIN
Richmond

THIS oddly handsome little shore bird broke up house-keeping in his original habitat, and is now generally thought of as a prize of the upland gunner. The flesh is absolutely delectable.

Before market gunning was made illegal, the woodcock was too greatly in demand by city gourmets who were willing to pay premium prices to get him. While his numbers are depleted both because of this and a shrinking habitat, he has made a sufficient comeback to allow an open season.



Commission photo by Kesteloo

As quarry, he ranks with the world's finest. Weighing in at something like eight ounces, this bantam-weight has a perfect genius for unpredictably erratic behavior that requires super-marksmanship and consummate gun-handling skill from the huntsman. Such effort is well rewarded. The woodcock is one of the greatest of table delicacies, out-ranked only by the grouse.

Woodcock is generally served with a cullis. Cullis is a typically French nicety for designating a sauce made with multilarded intestines. In a nutshell, what the cook is expected to do is to roast the woodcock whole, remove the guts, chop them up, arrange them neatly on a slab of toast,

set the roasted bird, halved, back on top and send the whole thing to the table. Since the total diet of the woodcock consists mainly of yummy earthworms, the whole idea may leave you somewhat cold—even pretty thoroughly chilled. It rather strikes me that way.

Actually, it is not quite as bad as it sounds. The method I like to use is essentially the same as for pressed duck* and is not unlike the classic preparation for Woodcock Metternich. I have no idea how the dish came by its name, but I have always thought that while Prince Metternich enjoyed a certain reputation for political deviousness, the things a cook does to woodcock in the kitchen are more Machiavellian in nature. Metternich, too, preferred to clothe his deals in the respectability of diplomacy, whereas Machiavelli was considerably more open about the whole thing. So for lack of a better name we shall call our dish

WOODCOCK MACHIAVELLI

The first deviation from the classic cuisine is that instead of roasting the woodcock(s) intact, I find it less exacting to remove the supremes (breasts) before cooking. It is difficult enough to get a fairly good sized bird such as a duck roasted brown and still keep it nicely rare. The small size of the woodcock increases the problem tenfold.

Set the raw supremes aside after cutting them out, and keep them covered to prevent drying but at room temperature in order that they be ready for cooking at the crucial moment. With a cleaver or a very large knife, cut the rest of the carcass into five pieces. Just sort of whack it up, bones, viscera and all. Put this in a roasting pan and spoon enough clarified butter over it to baste and brown it. Roast in a very hot oven preheated to 475 degrees until it just begins to cook. While there is still ample free running blood retained in the flesh, remove it to the duck press, first draining off as much butter as possible. Screw the press down hard to extract the last possible drops of blood and juice. Keep this warm—not hot, just warm. If it gets too hot, the blood will separate and dry out. Then you *really* do have a mess.

Turn your attention now to the roasting pan and the butter that is left in it. There should be no more than a tablespoonful per bird. Pour off any excess and save it. It may come in handy if the sauce seems to need buttering at the end. A certain amount will smooth it, but too much will, of course, separate and make the sauce appear greasy. This

is something the cook simply has to learn to judge by hard experience.

Set the roasting pan over moderately high heat, and quickly saute the breasts in it. Keep them reasonably underdone, and work as rapidly as skill allows. Remove each carefully as it browns, lining them up side by side on a hot platter. Sprinkle them with burnt brandy. Do not flame the breasts—flame the brandy and then sprinkle the remaining essence over the supremes.

Deglaze the pan with a little brandy. Reduce it until it becomes a trifle syrupy and then stir in a small amount of

*"Let's Cook a Wild Duck Dinner," *Virginia Wildlife*, December 1967.

panada* for thickening. This naturally lightens the sauce and if it seems to be an unattractive shade, it can be darkened with a bit of caramel or one of the bottled gravy colorings.

When sauce base in the roasting pan suits your fancy, reduce the heat and add the cullis from the duck press. Heat through, stirring like fury until you get a fairly homogeneous sauce. It should not boil or you will cook the cullis. That is to be avoided at all cost. A wire whip is the best tool to use. Watch the sauce carefully and remove from heat if it shows the slightest inclination to curdle. When ready, take a medium coarse sieve and strain the sauce over the waiting supremes on the platter. Add some pretty fresh sprigs of parsley or watercress and serve it up with some fried potatoes or home-made potato chips.

Nothing else should go to the table with this dish or be allowed to interfere with its superb flavor. Neither should any dish precede or follow it that will taint the diner's palate. In planning the total menu the woodcock should stand out as the supreme effort.

A half dozen new oysters with a squeeze of lemon but emphatically without a so-called cocktail sauce, might be served first and a very simple salad such as fresh or frozen asparagus tips with a cold Hollandaise or a very mild vinaigrette could follow as a separate course. Then if you must have dessert which is really an anti-climax, at least clear the palate first with a mild cheese such as an Edam and perhaps a glass of fine Madeira or a not too sweet Port.

This incidentally, is as close as wine gets to woodcock at our table. To my mind woodcock is one dish that stands absolutely on its own merit. There is nothing that could possibly enhance it, so anything that goes with it can only detract. Furthermore, it is unthinkable to go through all the intricacies of this elaborate preparation only to hear some fool praise the wine. At that point the cook would be forgiven for omitting the asparagus vinaigrette in favor of serving the diner en brochette.

Perhaps I should note for anyone who may have a question in the matter, that woodcock is one of those game birds that is vastly improved by hanging until it is fairly high. As with all feathered game in this category, it can be, and unfortunately often is, cooked fresh or nearly so. But the full enjoyment of its delicate flesh is discovered only when it is very well seasoned by hanging.

Let me add that it assuredly is not necessary to go through the deglazing with brandy and adding the panada to the sauce, but it does give the illusion of a cooked sauce without serious damage to the flavor. However, if your palate is geared to it, you can certainly eliminate this part of the preparation and instead take the cullis directly from the press, warming it slightly if necessary in a chafing dish just as with the pressed duck. Pour this directly over the supremes on the platter, serve it up and set to.

Without a duck press, it is still possible to make the dish but you have got to want it badly! Simply grind in a food chopper what went into the duck press and then strain it through a fine sieve. That sounds a great deal easier than it is, and I definitely do not recommend it to any but the most experienced cook.

*Panada is a simple preparation used primarily in thickening fish fumets. Basically it is much like a bread sauce and is occasionally used as I am using it here. To make it, take a slice or two of French bread or home-made type white bread. Remove all crust and soak in scalded cream. When perfectly soggy, beat it to a smooth creamy sauce with a wire whip. A blender will do the same job but it means one more dish to wash later.

Artists and Carvers

By ROBERT B. BELTON, JR.
Manassas

I KNEW immediately I'd seen that painting somewhere before. It was of a red-winged blackbird perched on a cattail beside a small pond. The scene was so lifelike that I expected the bird to start and fly away at any second. I realized two things almost simultaneously—first, that the scene was nearly identical to one about which I had written an article for *Virginia Wildlife* (May 1968) and second, that this painting was the one used for the cover of another edition of *Virginia Wildlife* (April 1969).

My wife and I had been on a short vacation to Assateague



Pintail decoy by Dan Brown took first place, Working Class, National Decoy Contest, Babylon, Long Island, New York, March, 1969.

Island. We were reluctantly heading home, even though we both felt a hundred percent better after three days' enjoyment of Assateague's wonderful sun, sand and surf.

But now we were in Salisbury, Maryland, in the home of Dan Brown, one of Maryland's outstanding waterfowl carvers and painters. We had come to Dan's home out of our desire to see for ourselves the handiwork of one of these talented people and to see if we could acquire one of his creations.

As we entered the dining room area, there sat the red-winged blackbird painting on the table. The artist who painted it is John W. (Bud) Taylor, whose work is known to all *Virginia Wildlife* readers. In fact, he did the illustration used with my May 1968 article, "The Day the Redwings Stole the Show," and his works have appeared in *The National Geographic*, National Wildlife Federation publications, the *Maryland Conservationist* and *Wildlife in North Carolina*.

As it turned out Bud Taylor and the Dan Browns are

close friends, and there were other examples of Bud's work on the dining room table and on the dining room and living room walls. We admired these paintings and examples of Dan Brown's work while Dan finished a conversation on duck carving and painting with a local gentleman who had recently taken up this fascinating and exacting hobby.

Soon we were discussing Dan's efforts and being shown some of his prize-winning creations, ranging from fine miniatures to a full-sized pintail. Since 1966 he has competed around the country, winning "Best of Show" at the Midwest Decoy Contest near Detroit in 1967. At the National Decoy Contest in 1968 he won a blue ribbon and at the International Decoy Contest in Davenport, Iowa, he received three blue ribbons, two "seconds" and a "third," including best decorative miniature, best decorative shore bird and a first on a working brant.

In his travels Dan has come to know and respect many other waterfowl carvers and painters, such as Arnold Melbye of Yarmouth, Mass., his neighbor in Salisbury, Paul Nock, and the famed Ward brothers of Crisfield, Maryland.

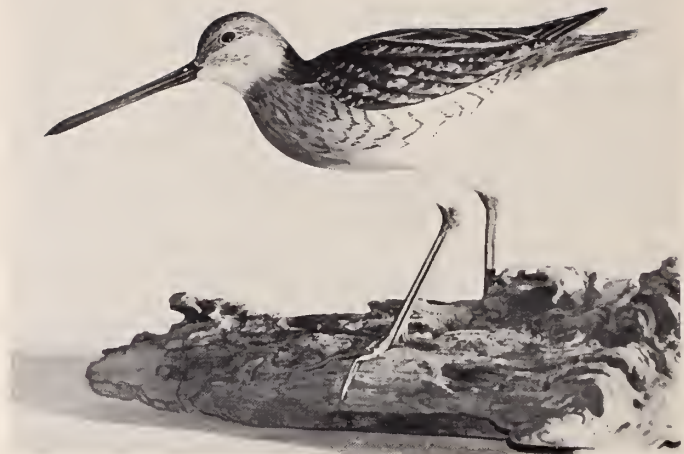
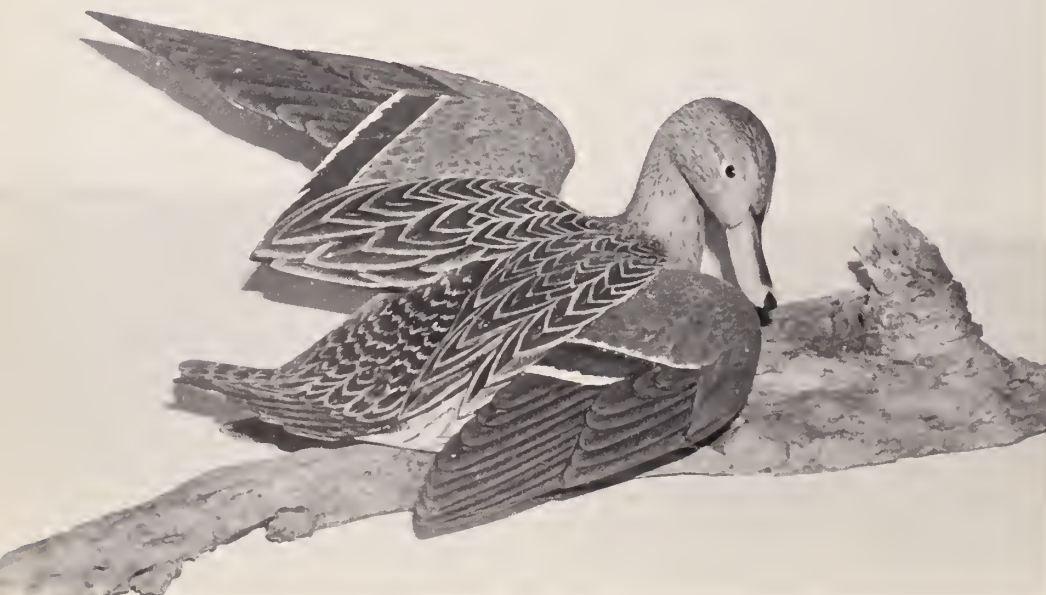
He told us of the various kinds of carving he does, including finely detailed miniatures two to three inches long, slightly larger ducks or shore birds with a minimum amount of detail, and full-sized creations that are exact to the minutest detail.

He prices his works according to the amount of time required to produce them; this, of course, is based on the amount of detailed carving and painting required by his customer, or by himself in the case of competition carvings.

Where size, shape and color are concerned, Dan and his cohorts are perfectionists. It is only through long experience and the time-honored trial-and-error method that the techniques required for this exacting hobby are perfected. And for many, including Dan, this hobby turns into a full-time occupation.

Not so simple a procedure is followed to paint the side of a wood duck, for example, as to decide on a color and just apply it. To get the proper effect, two or three colors

This life-size pintail hen took second place in its category.



Brown's first place jacksnipe, in Decorative Shore Bird category, shows carver's meticulous attention to detail.

may be applied, in separate steps. Brush strokes are carefully controlled, to insure that not only the colors but the texture is true to life. In this respect Dan Brown and Bud Taylor are closely allied, as evidenced by the life-like appearance of the bird's feathers in the red-winged blackbird painting. Models used, in many cases, must be live ones. A dead duck's feet, for example, shortly take on a bluish hue; the novice easily can be fooled by such things, which separate "also rans" from winners during competition and in the eyes of exacting customers.

Dan, Bud Taylor and many other noted wildlife carvers and artists are industriously preparing for a major event, the Atlantic Flyway Waterfowl and Bird Carving Exhibit, to be held in the Salisbury Civic Center, October 10-12. Contributors to this exhibition will come from all over the United States and from Canada as well and will include, besides Dan Brown and Bud Taylor, G. Braddock de Gavre (Lt. Gen. ret.), Onancock, Va.; J. Corbin Reed, Chincoteague, Va.; and Daniel Marshall, Saxis Island, Va.; as well as Paul Nock, the Ward brothers and many others.

Also on exhibit will be part of the collection of antique decoys of Roy Bull of Townsend, Va., featuring Virginia decoy makers.

This exhibit will benefit the Ward Brothers Foundation, the purpose of which is "to create and maintain a memorial to Lem Ward and Steve Ward and any other persons deemed to be outstanding in the field of wild life carvings, wild life art, and the conservation of natural resources and wildlife. . . ."

Many of Dan Brown's products are mounted on pieces of driftwood, collected for him mainly by some of his fishermen friends. So, to doubly insure an enjoyable time, collect yourself a little driftwood and drop by Dan's house in Salisbury some afternoon. Maybe Bud Taylor will be there, too, and you will receive a warm welcome.

Happy Hunting

By KATHERINE W. MOSELEY
Rixeyville

IT is an old superstition that on All Hallows Eve witches, banshees, goblins and ghosts run rampant through the country performing all sorts of ghastly deeds. Since bats and owls are mysterious denizens of the night, they have their place in Halloween folklore.

Long ago bats were considered Satan's cherubs with Hell their birthplace. Ever since, they have been repugnant to man. The name itself is used unpleasantly. "Batty" or "Bats in the Belfry" for the mentally disturbed. A disliked woman may be called "an old bat." "Blind as a bat" does the little night flyer an injustice as do the other insults. Bats can see and their senses of hearing and touch are so acute that a flight of bats may thread its way through groves of trees or a city block studded with houses without a bungle.

Bats possess a natural system of radar. When not asleep all bats utter sounds that vary from a low squeak to a shrill cry inaudible to human ears. In flight the sounds are constant. The rapid air vibrations of the high-pitched sounds bounce off solid objects, and the sound waves are thrown back to the bats. Strangely, bats are not confused

Charles W. Schwartz photo



Nat. Aud. Soc. photo by Cruickshank

by the ultrasonic squeal of other bats since they are familiar with their own sounds.

Our American, or little brown bat, is truly one of the strangest animals. Its wings are not like feathered bird wings but are of flexible, leathery skin. The membranes stretch to the hind legs and from the hind legs to the tail. It has short, clawed thumbs for grasping and naked hind toes for hooking the body in its typical upside down position for resting. It is an ugly little creature with rows of sharp teeth in a wide mouth, a pug nose, and a chin. Some think it wears a resemblance to a human. Others say it is more like a flying mouse.

Bats are creatures of the night. They roost through the day under eaves of houses, barns, in caves, hollow trees, and rocks. As many as thirty may crawl into one small cave.

(Continued on page 18)



A TOUCH OF WILDERNESS

By JOE and GALE ALEXANDER
Elkin, North Carolina

TWO years ago we paid \$1.29 for a small bird feeder which turned out to be one of the best investments we've ever made. In these days of increasing costs and decreasing values we were amazed to find a thousand-fold return on our "investment" in terms of education and lasting enjoyment. This small feeder introduced us to a whole new world—a wild world of wings and feathers which unfolded right at our fingertips.

Our duty station at that time was the Marine Base at Quantico, Virginia, some 20 miles down the Potomac River from Mount Vernon. We were living in a bleak, old, three-story, multi-family apartment building surrounded by identical structures on the Base. Right back of the building, a heavy growth of trees came up a ravine toward us, but the swarms of kids and dogs made us despair of attracting any wildlife whatsoever. Hanging that little feeder outside the second story window by my desk appeared to be a forlorn gesture, and we doubted if even the lowly house sparrows would visit. How wrong we were!

I clearly remember our first visitor. While working at my desk one evening, I heard a noise at the window and turned to see—sixteen inches away—a white-breasted nuthatch upside down on the feeder, sorting out the sunflower seeds from the millet. This thrilling experience inspired us to expand our windowsill facilities, and in the remaining 2½ years of our tour at Quantico we watched in delight as 24 species of wild birds came to our window to eat, to drink, to train their youngsters, to scuffle for position and prestige, and to pass on and be replaced by their next generation. Our visitors are listed in tabular form on page 22.

The size of our window was hardly larger than our TV screen—yet what we saw at the sill feeder was infinitely more entertaining and educational. Many times we would watch for hours, motionless but comfortable, and thoroughly fascinated by the steady parade of feathered guests. The point is, this experience is available to almost anyone—and you don't have to live in a North Woods' cabin to share it. For example, right now it is snowing in Quantico—one of those late winter, wet snows that clings to the tree limbs, turning them into a sculptor's fantasy-land. Down below the children are noisily enjoying the snow, but up here at the feeder is a male cardinal. He is sixteen inches away from me. Flakes of snow sparkle like diamonds on his scarlet coat, and with his black mask he resembles a Manchurian aristocrat. He regards me gravely as he neatly husks a sunflower seed, turning it round and round in his vise-like beak. He honors me with his presence, this, the state bird of the Commonwealth of Virginia—majestic against the white snow. And I submit that this sight alone is worth a hundred canned TV serials. Try it sometime.

Expansion of our facilities was easy. I fastened a 12" x

30" board to the windowsill and added a small perch around its perimeter. This quadrupled our feeding area, but we could have used even more space. We had heavy bird traffic during all seasons of the year, but during the snowstorms we felt like we were air controllers at Washington National Airport—the smaller birds flying holding patterns while the larger ones dined. Our record congregation at any one time on that 12 x 30 board consisted of 15 birds when a swarm of purple finches passed through Quantico one winter and stopped by for lunch. We once had a total of six different species on the feeder at one time, a nuthatch, a titmouse, a chickadee, a downy woodpecker, a myrtle warbler, and a cardinal—this was quite a circus. On one memorable occasion we had three different kinds of woodpeckers dining simultaneously—a hairy, a downy, and a red-bellied. Another banner day occurred when four male cardinals landed on the feeder at once—before the aerial dogfight started!

Certainly the food we served was the main attraction. The sunflower seeds and millet became mere appetizers. Our spread soon included chopped cocktail peanuts, cracked English walnuts, suet chunks, peanut butter, cornbread crumbs, and—the specialty of the house—a pan of mixed goodies which we called "Woodpecker Pudding." Gale got the original idea for this concoction from a library book but elaborated on the ingredients as her "customers'" taste dictated. For your possible use, here is our successful recipe:

Put 4 cups of water and 2 cups of oatmeal into a large pot. Cook as directed for oatmeal. Remove from heat and immediately add 1 pound of lard and 1 cup of peanut butter. Stir until melted and add dry oatmeal, chopped nuts, bread crumbs, cornmeal, bird seed and grits. Mix well and pour into tin foil pans. Serve warm, cold, or frozen.

Sounds awful, doesn't it? But it was extremely and instantly popular with most of our visitors. The table shown here lists those birds who preferred this delicacy. Note that at least 17 species favored the "Woodpecker Pudding," even including some of the seed-eaters like cardinals, juncos and white-throats. Gale took a lot of kidding about her "cooking for the birds" but the fact is, we had the best-fed birds in town and they rewarded her efforts by visiting more and more often.

With so many different bird personalities available at such a close range, it wasn't long before we came to know our individual visitors quite well. We learned much about them that would have been hard to find in bird books or to be seen through binoculars on bird walks.

Our number one favorite was a male red-bellied woodpecker, a magnificent jewel of a bird. His name is a misnomer, though, for the faint rouge on his belly is hardly

(Continued on page 21)

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

WATERFOWL HUNTING RESTRICTIONS EASED. Virginia waterfowl hunters will enjoy a slight easing of regulations this year in the form of a longer goose season in most of the state and an extra mallard in the daily bag limit.

The season for hunting ducks, coots and gallinules will open November 22 and close January 10. Hunters will be permitted 3 ducks daily, including only one redhead or canvasback, not more than two wood ducks, and not more than two blacks ducks. Last year's special bag limit restriction on mallards has been lifted as a result of improved water conditions and good production on the breeding grounds this year.

Except in the Back Bay area, goose season will extend from November 10 through January 24 with a daily bag limit of 3 instead of last year's limit of 2, and brant season will open November 10 and close January 17 with a daily limit of 6. In the Back Bay area, goose and brant seasons will conform to the duck, coot and gallinule season, November 22 to January 10, and the goose limit in this area will be one per day. North Carolina and states to the south have the same reduced goose season and bag limit as Back Bay because goose populations in these areas have been dwindling in recent years while geese elsewhere in the Atlantic Flyway have been on the increase.

In addition to the daily bag limit on ducks, geese and brant, hunters may take 10 coots, 15 gallinules, 5 mergansers including not more than one hooded merganser, and 7 sea ducks (scoters, eiders or old squaws) in the aggregate.

Possession of waterfowl is limited to one daily bag of six brant, and one canvasback or redhead, and two daily limits of all other species.

D U CLAIMS BEST DUCK HATCH SINCE 1952. The spring and summer of 1969 might well turn out to be the most successful for waterfowl production on the Canadian Prairies since 1952, reports Ducks Unlimited, a private waterfowl conservation organization with extensive "duck factories" in Canada. We won't return to the high waterfowl populations of the mid-fifties in one season, they say, because the current breeding population is smaller, but the news of a big hatch should be welcomed by waterfowl hunters who have seen their sport wither as the breeding population of most species dwindled in recent years.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has echoed earlier reports by Ducks Unlimited of greatly improved conditions on waterfowl breeding grounds this summer. Breeding populations are reported to be 12 percent above a year ago and the water area available for breeding is double that of last year.

It is estimated that Atlantic Flyway hunters bagged 167,800 geese, 1,276,800 ducks and 101,600 coots during the 1968 season. Of these, Virginia waterfowl hunters, calculated at some 15,590 strong, are credited with 100,300 ducks and 11,300 geese. This figures out to 6.41 ducks and .59 geese per hunter for the season. In the Flyway, black ducks ranked number one in the hunters' bag followed closely by mallards, then wood ducks, and in fourth place, green-winged teal. The Virginia species composition in the bag follows the Flyway pattern except that teal outrank woodies in the Old Dominion and widgeons rank fifth. Scaup and canvasbacks each make up slightly more than 4 percent of the Virginia duck kill.

A greater number of juveniles in last year's fall flight indicates that production on the breeding grounds showed some improvement last spring. The age ratio improved to 3.5 young for each adult bagged in 1968 from a low of 1.4 young per adult in 1965. The Virginia hunters' bag showed some improvement with 2.3 young per adult up from 1.3 young per adult in 1965 but the state's divers and even the widgeon were still on a downward trend last fall. Less than 50 percent of the canvasbacks bagged in Virginia were young of the year and only about one-third of the redheads were juveniles. It is pretty obvious that any time hunters are taking more than one adult bird along with each juvenile they are cutting down the overall population.



BY THE SEA

THERE'S a certain turbulence about the seaside. The waves never stop busting onto the sand. Like the rising sun, the tide is a natural phenomenon that seems perpetual. To seashore newcomer and denizen alike the surf's foamy brine is a thing most apparent. But the breaking tide is an exclamation point, a crashing introduction to a less apparent world of beach wildlife.

It is a mysterious movement, the surf. Many times one can't outguess a wave, anticipate its strength. The surf unfurls its busy fingers with a magician's touch—faster than the eye. An incoming whitecap holds the force to knock down the biggest man, or enthrall an excited child to dance at the outer fringes of its caressing foam.

The surf is the doorstep of an ocean teeming with life. It also brings to land things that have died.

The surf imports shells, nature's most abundant seaside artifacts. The shell, in the hand of the tourist, quickly converts from a bivalve remnant into a trinket or souvenir. The colorful scallop, the thick-ribbed cockle, the hump-backed ark, the large oval surf clam; the elongated jack knife, or razor clam; the roughly surfaced oyster and the thick quahog, or hard-shelled clam, all bespeckle the wet brown sands at the surf's edge.

As one walks the beaches, one finds other specimens washed up by turgid tides. At high tide levels small black horned skate egg cases, known as "mermaid's purses," scatter atop the sands. The egg cases of the whelk, a gastropod that carries a spirally coiled shell, are less numerous, but not hard to find. These cases are small, circular, paper-like containers strung together snake-like on a horny twine. Through small holes at the top of each case pour hundreds of miniature whelk shells. Shake the cases and you hear the infant shells rattling like tiny maracas.

Also found on the beach are remains of dead fish. Many fish, when they die, have one more migration left—the slow, pulsating journey aboard the waves to land where the beachcomber pays homage with one final look of curiosity. On the wide, white sands of Ocracoke Island dead skates are prevalent. The sun fries the skins stiff. Ironically, not far from many of these remains are the black egg cases.

Occasionally a dead gull or tern is washed ashore. Their white plumage is easily spotted a half-mile offshore. The laughing gull is the most common bird along the Hatteras shore, while Ocracoke's beach is dotted by the sandpiper. The laughing gull's head is a black so precise and set off from its white body as to look painted. A smaller bird is the tern. Terns are black only on the top of the head. They hover over the water like helicopters searching for food below. Suddenly they dive head first into the water yanking up a small fish. The gulls and terns

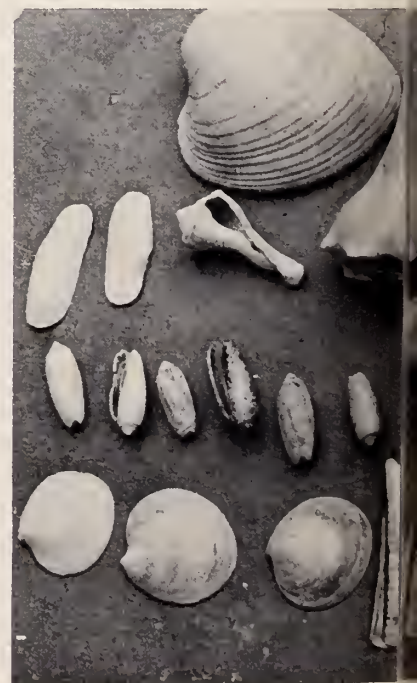
By BILL WEEKES
Martinsville

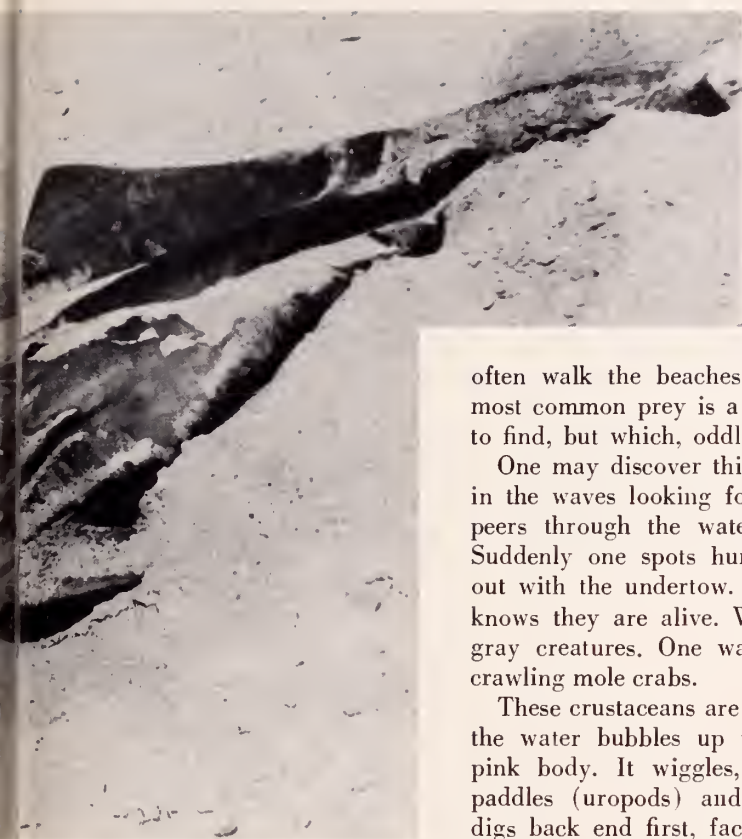
Everywhere by the sea there is death amid
white sand by restless

Ancient ship's timber adorned with
bivalve shells.

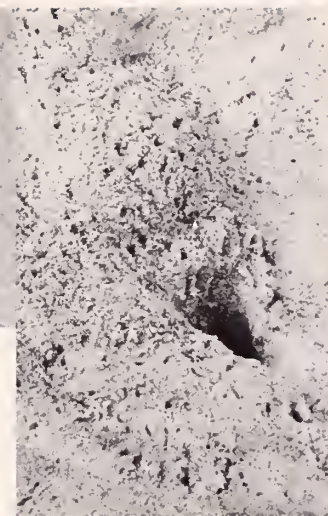


Shells are among the seaside's most abundant
cockles, and a whelk egg case; upper left:





ing life. A dead porpoise cast upon the
av dries in the sun.



Above: ghost crab heads for his
hole in the sand; below: skate with
egg cases.

often walk the beaches with food on their minds. Their most common prey is a little fellow you have to look hard to find, but which, oddly enough, is almost omnipresent.

One may discover this ubiquitous creature while wading in the waves looking for shells. The sun is bright as one peers through the water. An undertow clears the foam. Suddenly one spots hundreds of gray little balls rushing out with the undertow. They move in such a manner one knows they are alive. With a pail one catches these little gray creatures. One watches with curiosity the wiggling, crawling mole crabs.

These crustaceans are an oddity. Put one on the sand and the water bubbles up to submerge its oval, streamlined, pink body. It wiggles, digs in with powerful rear end paddles (uropods) and half covers itself in the sand. It digs back end first, facing the tide which brings in food. The mole crab's antennae used for breathing and feeding extend out of the sand. One can unearth a mole crab or two with almost every two-handed scoop of sand lifted out of the surf.

There are other singular forms of life along the beach. Among the dunes, holes and tracks are everywhere. One wonders, as one tramps through the yielding sand, what causes them. Frequently one tries to excavate these burrows to find the digger. But one fails. Then one high noon, while the sun is broiling, one may unexpectedly catch the tunnel artist out of its lair. Here one confronts a crab of



sturius. Lower right: scallops; upper right: surf clams; above the coral (center):
he and next to it a conch; below conch: moon shell, and razor clams; lower left:
olive shells and disk shells.



a different sort—the ghost crab. It is easily frightened. It scuttles across the white pebbles, its yellow claws raised, its protuberant eyes sticking up on tiny stalks. Quickly, the crab finds a hole, squeezes up its ten-inch leg span and disappears like a ghost.

Other tracks are also present. Tracks resembling zippers are left by scavenger beetles. Small dents are made by beach hoppers.

Amid the beach and marram grasses other creatures roam, at times discernible. The scurrying lizard, the tiny sand-colored locust, the stinging "green head" flies are among the inhabitants.

Back at the low tidal area, one spots a foreign colony of life. It usually rides a wooden "ship," maybe on a board that dances crazily in the surf. It may even invade the shore on paper "landing crafts," like a coffee cup or cardboard. Barnacles are odd crustaceans. In the laval stage they swim about, then attach themselves to shells or timber. They mature into shelled creatures rooting themselves to things by stalks. Looking closely one notices feathery fingers extending out of the shell. These are the barnacle's feet, used to wipe plankton and other food into its mouth.

Such is a smattering of wildlife one may find on the beach, whether it be at Hatteras, Virginia, or Myrtle. More is to be discovered with each return trip back to the sea-side and the surf. These examples are good for openers.

SIGHT IN



FOR BETTER HUNTING

By BILL COCHRAN
Roanoke

A HUNTER out in the brisk November woods spots a deer 80 yards away. It is an easy shot. He takes his time, carefully lining up the sights and squeezing off the round. But the animal simply disappears with a great leap at the report of the gun. A miss.

Why?

Probably because the hunter failed to take time earlier to sight in his rifle. Every year, numerous sportsmen, no doubt the great majority, go afield without bothering to sight in their rifles. Some go thinking that the new rifle they bought was fully sighted in for them at the factory. Others will be out with old rifles they've used year after year with sights so poorly aligned that they can hit only by accident on all but the easiest shots.

Doubtlessly, the biggest reason of all for missing game, be it deer or squirrel, is the fact that the average hunter never takes time to find out what his rifle will—or will not—do. It's a shame, too. Nowadays quite often a hunting trip, especially big game hunting, is a once-a-year affair representing a considerable investment in both time and money. A hunter may have but one opportunity to bring down game during an entire trip. If he muffs his chance with a gun that shoots off target, it can border on the tragic side.

And there is more to it than that. When a hunter takes to the woods poorly prepared, he will likely cripple and wound game. This is cruel, a tragic waste of our natural resources. It is unsportsmanlike. It should not happen.

It is difficult to understand why many sportsmen, before opening day of the hunting season, will spend more time looking for their long underwear than making certain their rifles are hitting where they should. This is one of the great blotches on American hunting.

Actually, sighting in is an enjoyable experience. It gets you outdoors. It is fine sport during the summer months or just prior to the fall hunting season.

More than this, it gives you self confidence by assuring you that when you put your sights on something you are going to hit it. This is a sure cure for buck fever. In short, practice is necessary to excel in any sport, hunting included.

Some people apparently think that sighting in a rifle is such a mysterious and baffling task that no one other than a gunsmith or expert rifleman can do it. This is nonsense. All you need is a range with a safe backstop, some type shooting rest, preferably a bench rest if you can get it to steady your rifle, ammunition, targets and a few tools you already have around the house.

The sportsman from a rural area will likely have a suitable place to shoot on his own land or nearby property. For the urban hunter, finding a spot to zero a gun may be somewhat more difficult. Fortunately, the National Rifle Association, realizing the importance of sighting in, recently has urged its hundreds of nationwide affiliated clubs to open their facilities to the public for the purpose of zeroing guns and practice shooting before the hunting season. Clubs like the Roanoke Rifle and Revolver Association not only open the door to their range during special fall sighting-in days, but also provide bench rests, sand bags and help from professional gunsmiths and expert shooters. Once his gun is zeroed, the visiting sportsman is invited to practice shoot at a running deer target.

Each year, sportsmen taking advantage of sighting-in days at clubs across the state discover that their rifle is shooting off target several feet at 100 yards—enough to miss a deer standing broadside. This happens because some guns change their point of impact from year to year. Sights often get knocked out of alignment. These must be corrected.

As for new guns, it is true that they are sighted in at the factory. They are both bore sighted and actually shot and adjusted in many cases. But no man or machine can do a perfect job of sighting in a rifle for an individual shooter.

In the first place, no two people hold a rifle exactly alike. No two look through the sights—especially open sights—exactly the same. Some may take a coarse bead; others a fine one. Indeed, two good shooters may fire strikingly different groups at 100 yards while using the same rifle and ammunition out of the same box. Furthermore, different

Typical scene at club sighting in day. This one is the Roanoke Rifle and Revolver Association.





A spotter scope can be a useful tool for sighting in.

types of ammunition vary enough to alter a rifle's performance.

Thus, sighting in becomes a personal thing. You have to do it for yourself.

For a man who does a considerable amount of hunting, it is really wise for him to join a gun club or build a safe range on his own land or make arrangements to shoot on the land of others in order to have facilities for sighting in and shooting practice throughout the year. A sportsman should check his rifle on the range before each hunting trip, even though it was hitting where he aimed when he last used it.

The best way to sight in a big game rifle the first time or to zero one which is known to be out of alignment is to start by shooting at a target only 25 yards away. There are two reasons for this. At that short a range, it is pretty certain that you will get a hit somewhere on the target. Then, too, you are taking advantage of the fact that the bullet crosses the line of sight twice, first a few yards from the muzzle, when it is rising, then at a much greater distance, when it is falling.

If you are on target at 25 yards, you should be hitting pretty close to where you want to at 100 yards. Of course, the firing at 25 yards is only a preliminary part of sighting in. You'll want to actually test the gun at 100 yards.

At that range, most big game hunters desire their rifles to hit two to three inches high. This way, they can hold

With a steady rest a youthful shooter learns the technique.



directly on target at greater distances than 100 yards and still the bullet will not rise or fall enough to make any great difference in where it strikes.

It is important to use a steady rest when sighting in a rifle. A bench rest with sand bags is best, if this is available. If not, you can make a rest out of a wooden box, steady table or sawhorse. The front of the rifle should be rested on something fairly soft since a gun will recoil away from a hard object.

Make certain that the sights are mounted tightly to the gun. If the firearm is new, it may be well to fire several rounds to make certain it seats itself, disregarding where the rounds hit.

Then, using exactly the same kind of ammunition you plan to hunt with, settle down and shoot some three round groups, allowing the barrel to cool after each round. The center of the three round groups will be the average point of impact. If the gun is off target, you will need to adjust the sights after each group until you are zeroed.

This is fairly easy to do with telescope sights and with iron sights that have adjustable dials. You merely adjust the dials, one for elevation and one for windage, moving the impact of the bullet in the direction you want it to go.

With open iron sights, it is somewhat more difficult. Generally such sights have notches whereby you can adjust



The sweet reward of having a gun that hits where you aim it.

elevation. But no provision for windage is made; thus if the rifle is shooting to the left or right, you may have to take a mallet and knock the rear sight over. The rule is to move the rear sight in the direction you want the impact to move. In order to accomplish the same thing with the front sight, you move it in the opposite direction of where you want the impact to go.

As can be seen, such adjustment is tricky at best. A good telescope sight or iron receiver sight with definite gradations for adjustment is a fine investment for the serious hunter.

Once you have your rifle hitting where you desire, it is wise to take some random shots at various distances—less and greater than 100 yards—as a means of practice. You may want to change from a paper target to a box-type target so you will be shooting at something with some depth to it. Always, the utmost in safety precautions must be observed.

Even if no adjustments are necessary for your rifle, you certainly haven't wasted your time during sighting-in procedures. Just to know your rifle is hitting right where you want it is of tremendous value to a hunter. It gives you the tool and the confidence to bring home game instead of alibis.

Happy Haunting

(Continued from page 11)

About sunset they begin to pour out to whisk through the air and catch food on the wing. They are probably the world's most efficient mosquito exterminators. Most bats are insect-eaters and are of great economic value to mankind. Other species of bats are fruit-eaters.

Bats build no nests nor do they have dens but return to the same place each day to sleep, with head hanging downward, wings folded, and holding on with their hooked feet. The little brown bat probably spends half of its life hanging from the roof of some cave or building. It is a winter sleeper and finds a cave for hibernation if the temperature gets below forty degrees. They are of a social order and live and hibernate in colonies.

The bat's mating season is late in the fall. In May or June the offspring arrive. The mother bat gives birth to her young while hanging head up, supported by her thumbs. The newborn is caught in a membrane net. There is usually only one infant, rarely two. The young one immediately climbs up the mother's body to cling to her breast. There it



N.A.S. photo by Ross Kinne
Great horned owl.

will stay until it is practically grown. The mother carries it in this position even while she flies for food. She is an affectionate, tender mother. By three weeks the young bat is able to fly about and feed itself.

At our country home we see the bats most frequently around the outdoor night light which lures the moths and flame-loving insects. The bat's flight is fairly steady but often changes its route to duck and dive for food with rapid wing beats. So far, we have not had one in our hair, nor down the chimney, nor in any objectionable situation. By Halloween they are usually gone from the chilly, frosty night. Or could it be that witches have caught them all to use as a powerful ingredient for their Halloween brew? People once seriously believed this.

Owls are also victims of superstition, thought to be birds of bad luck and harbingers of death. Everyone knows the hoots, eerie screeches or wails of owls in the night. Their anxious shouts or shivering cries followed by the silent



Commission photo by Kesteloo
Barn owl.

stir of great wings make it easy to imagine the woods are full of ghosts or supernatural things.

Because of this sinister reputation it is reassuring to learn that the owl is the most effective mousetrap ever devised. Owls are nocturnal birds of prey which they capture with their feet. If the victim is not too large it is swallowed whole and the bones, hair or fur, are disgorged later in the form of pellets. Examination of these pellets by experts proves that the owl should be classified among the beneficial birds.

The owl's round eyes, surrounded by stiff-feathered discs, are directed forward, which means the head must be turned to see in different directions. The rigid eye position allows for binocular vision. The owl, then, has a supple neck with flexible neck vertebrae and quick reflex motions. Thus, they constantly move their heads from side to side. Owls are also blessed with keen ears to assist their eyesight.

There are many species of owls that range from the great horned owl, sometimes called "the feathered tiger," to the

Screech owl.
Leonard Lee Rue photo



little screech owl which could be dubbed "the feathered kitten." The great horned with the conspicuous ear tufts is the largest and most powerful of the owl family. It is able to live anywhere, provided there is abundant food. Rabbits, skunks, poultry, mice, and large insects make up its diet. The comparison to the tiger is because of its silent, stealthy hunting. It glides through the air as quietly as a shadow, then with a lightning swoop the murderous talons clutch the victim. Its hooting call is often confused with the call of the barred owl, though it is much stronger.

This bird can also yelp like a dog or squall like a cat. In fact it is often called the cat owl, not by its call but because of the shape of its head and its cat-like ear tufts.

The little screech owl is perhaps the best known owl because it makes its home close to country houses or even in hollows of trees in suburban areas. It has a characteristic screech which is a weird, sweet, tremolo which seems to wail a quivering cry of anguish. Superstition calls the cry the Graveyard Dirge. It also has two ear tufts of feathers on its forehead. The most interesting peculiarity of this small owl is that it develops two color phases; some are gray and some are red. It also is a mouse-killer at night and dozes through the day in some hollow tree huddled close to the trunk, relying on pose and protective coloration for safety.

The barred owl likes deep woods and swampy river lands as it adds frogs to its menu of mice and small rodents. Despite its love of solitude it is less timid than other owls and will nest in settled regions. A friend in Atlanta, Georgia, who lives in a wooded suburban section, wrote a charming letter of watching the mother barred owl teach her two fledglings to hunt. It was a dark, rainy day and the young birds were at the "low limb" stage. They would crouch waiting for a rodent to move before launching down in what he wrote of as a "controlled crash," after which they would walk around like embarrassed old men. The barred owl's hoot is similar to the great horned owl's, but it has eight accented hoots that end in a wailing squall. The

great horned owl may hoot up to six times without accent on any one. The volume and variety of the barred owl's calls give the impression of conversation with each other. It is said they will respond to even a crudely rendered imitation of its call by a human. The barred owl has no ear tufts, and the eyes are brown instead of yellow.

The Barn Owl is one of the farmer's best friends if he is plagued with rats and mice, as its voracious appetite causes it to devour tremendous numbers. Barn owls are always hungry and greedy eaters. One will gorge itself and he

ready to eat again in three hours. They will also eat moles, gophers, cats and squirrels. The barn owl is known as the Monkey Owl because of the resemblance with its heart-shaped face and no ear tufts. They nest in barns or other outbuildings on a farm but have been known to nest in a church steeple.

Nearly all owls use hollow trees or other natural cavities for their egg laying and incubation period. There may be from three to five white eggs. These eggs are rounder than many bird eggs, probably in order to be turned more easily in a very small nest during incubation. The young are thickly covered with white down and are born with tremendous appetites.

The worst enemies of the owl are men who shoot on sight a bird of prey. The owl's next great menace seems to be the crows. Often a band of roving crows discover a sleeping owl and they make its life so miserable that the owl finally takes to its wide wings and heads

skyward.

Owls do not migrate but some southward movement may take place. They are more evident in the winter in their wandering search for food. Once in a very severe winter a snowy owl paused with us briefly. We hear the owls more frequently in the summer nights, but the shivery call of the screech owl is the only one we can positively identify.

However, on this Halloween if banshees scream, goblins snort a rasping hiss, and ghosts sail by on silent wings, we may call out an open window, "Happy Haunting."

OCTOBER

By EVE SMIRNOW

Alexandria

SEA-BORN winds spread inward ruffling the marsh grass, cooling sun burned fields, and bringing relief to the limp summer-choked trees. October.

Men have roused their bodies and minds from the depths of summer's lethargy, and then hasten to their bayside sanctuary where they work with diligence and even joviality at physical manual labor to ready the chosen site for The Day. Men of diverse thoughts and opposing personalities working together to create on the wilderness shore a bird hunting haven for the coming winter. Their common strength: Anticipation.

The men set out in bulky waders or heavy leather boots and tramp through the marshes and tangles of bayberry and honeysuckle. In the river men force pilings into the hard mud bottom of waist-deep water. Prams arrive carrying loads of lumber to build the water blinds. Tools are taken in hand, and the men set about creating shelters atop the pilings. At the end of the weary day the shelters will stand: naked wooden structures waiting to be brushed with boughs of cedar.

Shore blinds are erected in much the same way. At advantageous locations pilings are driven into the marsh mud and the blinds, already built, are hoisted onto the poles by sheer perspiration. These blinds will be covered, too, but with marsh reeds and cattails to fool the unwary bird. The men are sweating and shouting and cheering at work well done.

Suddenly a man cries out and motions skyward. Silence falls; all eyes are raised; a shiver of exultation is felt by each man.

Overhead the first flock of Canada geese appear. They fly in V formation, honking their familiar call, and searching the waters below for food and a safe harbor. Perhaps in the next cove there will not be men stirring and the great birds will seek their shelter.

The men return to the work at hand with renewed vigor. Soon it will be time.

Hunters' Longest Season

(Continued from page 5)

Many modern nimrods, recognizing the popularity of squirrel hunting and the under harvesting of a valuable game crop, feel it is time we eliminated the hodgepodge of early seasons and made October the Virginia squirrel hunting month. This move can be accomplished by eliminating the numerous legislative acts, and giving the season selection to the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and its trained biologists. This is where the authority should be.

Come October 15 the firearms hunter has to lay down his rifle or shotgun, or limit his hunting to Camp Pickett Military Reservation where a special season opens October 15 and runs through January 31. But there is still plenty of squirrel hunting for the diehard. He will have to develop a new outdoor skill, though. The bowhunting season opens October 15, and the exciting sport of archery adds another dimension to the squirrel hunter's repertoire.

Having mastered his new weapon, the squirrel hunter is ready for another month in his favorite woods. The hunting hours are the same, the daily bag limit is unchanged, and any game bagged must be counted against the season limit of 75 bushytails.



Only the most hardy squirrels survive a severe winter, especially after a fall with a poor mast crop.

The rifleman turned bowhunter can employ the same tactics he has already used so successfully. He may have to improve his woodmanship, however, as the limited range of his bow and arrow necessitate his getting closer to his game. The stand method is by far the best choice for the bowhunter. Squirrels will still be active at their favorite hickory tree, but as the weather grows colder, shifting to a den tree may prove productive. Squirrels leave their nests early in the morning and return in late afternoon. The principal objection to the den tree is the limited time it allows for hunting—a few minutes after dawn and a brief period at the end of the day. The legal hunting hours of a half hour before sunrise to a half hour after sunset also restrict this method.

Because he has to work closer to his game, the bowhunter should exercise more care and dress in camouflage clothing. A good blind helps.

The nimrod who questions the challenge in squirrel hunting—as some do—should try bagging a limit of bushytails with the bow. The challenge is too great for many who have attempted it.

The bowhunting season ends November 15, but by then the small game season is already open west of the Blue Ridge, and the eastern season is just a couple of days away. For the first time firearms hunting is legal statewide. But there is a wide variety of other hunting too—rabbits, quail, grouse, deer—to divert the squirrel hunter's interest, and to attract other nimrods to the hunting grounds. In the Old Dominion, squirrels do not get much attention once the general hunting season starts. With other hunters and their

Early morning or late afternoon are the most productive times to hunt squirrels during early seasons.



dogs in the woods, those who do hunt squirrels find it difficult to employ their favorite methods.

November in Virginia is often mild—much like October, and squirrels feed and frolic rather freely. If the mast crop has been good they can be abundant.

By hunting in early morning or late afternoon the squirrel hunter can avoid much of the competition from other hunters. I experienced this last November. As I entered a favorite squirrel thicket I met a number of other hunters headed for home. Several were squirrel hunters with light game bags. Within 15 minutes the woods were quiet, but suddenly alive with game. Armed with a bow and arrow, I didn't put a dent in the squirrel crop, but it wasn't because of a scarcity of game.

By mid-November there is little point in taking a stand at a nut tree. Most of the nuts are gone. Success may come more quickly at a den tree as the squirrels leave or return from forays into the forest. During the winter months a number of squirrels often share a common den tree.

Squirrel hunting drops off rapidly once the winter season starts taking its climatic role seriously. The mortality rate from non-hunting causes is high among squirrels and only the hardy survive a severe winter. In cold weather squirrels may remain in their dens for several days. Then the squirrel hunter can become extremely frustrated.



Skinning a squirrel removes botfly larvae or "wolves." They do not affect the flesh.

The squirrel season ends officially on January 31—along with that on rabbits, grouse east of the Blue Ridge, and quail west of the Blue Ridge. But long before then the average hunter has already turned his attention to other game. After all, he has hunted the gamut of Virginia's varied climates—the heat, ticks, and insects of September, the Indian Summer of October, the frosty morns of November, and the ice and snow of December and January. Summer, fall and winter. Only in the spring has he been inactive, and if he wants to travel to Arkansas or Texas, he can fill his limit there as the trees start to bud.

A Touch of Wilderness

(Continued from page 12)

evident, even from 16 inches away. "Red-crowned" or "red-mantled" would be much more appropriate. We called him the Crown Prince because he was the true royalty of the woods—proud, independent, fiercely wild, incredibly beautiful. His father was the first of his lineage to visit our feeder, and we saw this young bird grow up. The Crown Prince was a true guest of honor and we accorded him every respect when he visited—even if it meant our freezing in an awkward position for the entire duration of his dinner. His wife was a commoner and looked bald in comparison. They never visited us together—one always acted as a sentinel in the nearby treetop while the other one ate.

On the other end of the social spectrum from the Crown Prince were several undesirable feathered visitors who came to our feeder as uninvited guests. The list of 24 birds in the table includes eight whom we classified as "persona non grata"—PNG—for a variety of reasons. Our bad guys were the starlings, blue jays, house sparrows, purple finches (when in flocks), grackles, cowbirds, pigeons, and—surprisingly enough—a flock of beautiful evening grosbeaks. (More on this later.) The starlings were the worst offenders. What a gross, alien species! Even their scientific name, *Sturnus vulgaris*, is truly an appropriate moniker. These imported birds, however, are thriving in America and, like the cockroach, will probably outlast us all. They are tough, aggressive, alert, and adaptable. Their stout necks and long sharp beaks make them formidable opponents to most other birds, and they rarely operate alone. I have seen our Crown Prince, the red-bellied woodpecker, acquit himself creditably in many one-on-one situations, but invariably when more starlings came to outflank him, he had to retreat. No one else in our woods stood up to them, not even the pugnacious mockingbirds, who abdicated and would not defend the feeder. Most of the time we shooed the unwelcome guests away and yet we were convinced that the starlings could tell whenever we left the room—many times we returned after only a minute's absence to find them swarming over the feeder like disgusting black maggots. Flapping a towel or shouting or rapping on the window glass was usually helpful. Perhaps this is not ecologically sound, but we thought our bird friends had enough competition with each other at the feeder without having to put up with mass invasion from these feathered assassins.

We learned a lot about competition in wildlife from our windowsill classroom. A distinct pecking order was very much in evidence among our welcomed visitors. At the top was the red-bellied woodpecker. When he came to dinner, every one else made for the exit. Next was the hairy woodpecker, followed by the mockingbird and the cardinal. At the very bottom of the scale was the chickadee—he had to eat on a dive bombing type of run. And yet the other day we saw one cocky little chickadee actually squat and hiss at a mockingbird who was advancing on his personal chunk of walnut! The way these birds responded to a challenge or threat was fascinating to watch. The male cardinals, for example, are extremely jealous of each other and will actually spit like cats in their rage. The downy and hairy woodpeckers fluff their headfeathers to increase their apparent size—the hairy doing this seems to have a head grotesquely the size of a kingfisher. The little Carolina wren flattens itself and opens wide its long beak. Juncos chipping at each other sound like

ricochets from tiny machine guns. The funniest sight of all is the "war dance" of the nuthatch. When his space on the feeder is threatened, this brash bird will flare his wings, hunch his neck, weave back and forth, and snap his beak ferociously. We have even seen him perform like this at his own reflection in the window! Gale calls him "Old Mr. Feisty." Seldom does another bird take the offensive against such a display, even though it makes us laugh out loud.

Competition was the keenest during May and June each year, when most of the fledglings were being raised. This period of time was the most engrossing of all for us as we watched the cyclical struggle of family raising unfold before our eyes. The infant chickadees appeared first, led to the feeder by their parents, all fluttering like hummingbirds. Then came the juvenile cardinals, awkward and splotchy. Next young downy woodpeckers, full sized and glossy, appeared. Despite their size, they continuously screamed for food from their harassed parents. The little hairy woodpeckers made their first public appearances at our feeder a full month after the young downys showed up. Full sized, richly feathered, squeaking vociferously, the young hairys placed strident demands on their exhausted, bedraggled parents. A memorable occasion was the early June twilight when the whole clan assembled around the "pudding"—two female "teenagers" being fed by their parents. Even though the adolescent woodpeckers were every bit as large as their parents, they were still hilariously clumsy. They fluttered into the window pane and did prat-falls off the little perch around the feeder as they reached out to stab another peanut. At the height of the spring feeding frenzy, we even saw one confused mother woodpecker inadvertently stuff a beak full of suet into the astonished mouth of a nearby sparrow, causing consternation to both species and great amusement to us.

On this same evening we first saw the Crown Prince's children. We had suspected that he had been feeding someone; for weeks he would leave the feeder with a full load of extra food in his big beak, and lately we had heard some suspicious squeaking in the leafy branches of the nearby white oak. That night they appeared on their own, confident, regal, delicately featured, a boy and a girl—the third generation of red-bellied woodpeckers to come to our windowsill feeder.

The cardinals had two broods that year, one in May and another in September. We watched the old patriarch bring his newest son to the feeder to instruct him in the fine art of dining. The older son (by four months), full grown but still dappled and gawky, tried to intervene but was chased away by the father.

Another incident impressed us with the strong family ties of the cardinals. A young mother flew into the room by accident one day when the window was open for cleaning. She panicked and began flying against the ceiling, bloodying her head. We finally caught her with a fish net, doctored her head and released her. During this time her whole family—mate and two youngsters—had been chirping worriedly just outside the window. When the mother rejoined them, they all flocked around her, making noises which were unmistakably concerned, relieved, and affectionate.

On the other hand, family ties in nature apparently do not extend to weakness or deformity. Our son found a young female downy woodpecker with a deformed wing who appeared to have been kicked out of the nest. She could

A Touch of Wilderness

(From page 21)

not fly and was at the mercy of the local cats, so we brought her up to the apartment. We put her in a secure corner of the feeder hoping that the parents would at least feed her there. No dice. They jabbed at her viciously with their beaks in total rejections. Our feeding efforts only prolonged the inevitable and she died within a week.

The more we watched, the more we learned about the characteristics and personalities of our wild neighbors. The tufted titmice, for example, looked like dapper little businessmen in tailored gray flannel suits, displaying a modest edge of orange vest. Of all our birds, the titmice were the most self assured. They would land on the feeder with an authoritative "thump," pick out their morsel, and fly to the white oak to eat it. Thence, a few notes of song and back for more. On occasion they would eat out of our hands, but this took a long, long time to accomplish.

The nuthatches, our first and perennial visitors, would never come as a pair. Like the red-bellied woodpeckers, one nuthatch would always stand guard while the other ate. They were aptly named, being true connoisseurs of nuts and with the capability of disemboweling a partially cracked English walnut with one "karate" stroke of their beak. From close range, these funny little birds look almost oriental. Another "Asian" is the white-throated sparrow. When seen from 16 inches, the markings on his head make him resemble a costumed Japanese *Noh* dancer!

The blue jays, too, had vivid head markings which belied their evil ways. Being blacklisted, the only way they could get our food was to raid in flight, snatching up a goody like a trick horseback rider. We must admit that we enjoyed watching these big fellows divebomb a marauding cat in the woods. They also demonstrated the same skill against an unsuspecting kid who was approaching a grounded fledgling. Blue jays are interesting, colorful birds—we had nothing really against them except that they ate too much and would intimidate our shier, smaller visitors like the myrtle warbler, Carolina wren, or the field sparrow.

The chickadees were small but not shy. Their bubbling spirits and amusing acrobatics offset their physical limitations—drab, no-neck, little butterballs. The chickadees and the downys lingered the latest in the evenings. The cardinals and white-throats were the first in line for breakfast in the mornings.

Incidentally, if you have difficulty distinguishing between the hairy and downy woodpeckers, you should try our close-up view. These two species would frequently feed side by side on our windowsill and, at this range, the differences are unmistakable. The hairy in such a comparison is huge, while the downy resembles a mere pocket-sized, scale model of his big cousin.

We noticed that of all the larger birds at the feeder, the male is infinitely more shy than the female. This was specifically true of the cardinals and *all* the woodpeckers. A pair of downys feeding on the shelf at this moment illustrate this observation. As I raise my hand the female doesn't bat an eye, but the male flits to the side of the building, and it will be a few moments before he peeks at me from around the corner with reproachful caution.

Shyness is *not* a characteristic of the evening grosbeaks, birds that neither of us had ever seen before. They arrived suddenly out of nowhere, painted bright yellow like wild Indians and appearing like a lost covey of miniature parrots. They were beautiful, bold—and as voracious as

starlings!! If our apartment had been built of sunflower seed, it would have been demolished in 20 minutes! We fed them for a week, buying sunflower seed in huge 25-pound sacks, but it soon became apparent that if it kept up, we were going to have to claim them as dependents for income tax purposes. So we cut off their supply for two weeks and made them move on. A pity! We could have supported a pair of them but not a full brigade!

We have described the feathered world at our windowsill to quite an extent, but not all of our visitors were birds. Late one night we heard a noise on the feeder, and startled, looked up to behold a small, brown animal with enormous eyes, shining fur, and a feathery tail—sure enough—a flying squirrel! To our amazement, he would visit for about 20 minutes every night, gliding from the upper branches of the white oak down to the feeder. He, too, preferred Gale's "woodpecker pudding," although he would also partake of the nuts, seeds, and suet along the way. Watching him was a sheer, unending delight for us—this elfin, trusting package of wildness, an arm's length away.

Our tour at Quantico ended before we could entice *all* the eligible birds in the neighborhood to our windowsill. We were particularly frustrated by the magnificent pileated woodpecker. Have you ever had a real good look at this bird? To us he could be the grandson of the giant pterodactyl—an incredible visitor twice removed from the Mesozoic Age. On two occasions he came within 50 feet of the feeder, sat looking at it intently for several minutes, but then flew away, unwilling to bridge the final gap. Just seeing that unearthly intruder so close was an eerie experience.

All of this from a casual investment of \$1.29 and the visit of that first nuthatch—keys which opened doors to an inspiring and fulfilling world for both of us. The activities on that windowsill feeder were certainly the highlights of our family's stay at Quantico. More significantly, we learned that even in this urban age there is still a hope for wildness available to the apartment cliff dwellers. "In wildness is the preservation of the world," said Thoreau, and he was absolutely right. In the more current vernacular: "Happiness is a red-bellied woodpecker raising his family right on your windowsill!"

WINDOWSILL FEEDER VISITORS (In order of appearance)

Visitor	Frequency	Woodpecker Pudding Eater	Remarks
1. White-breasted Nuthatch	Common	Frequently	—
2. Tufted Titmouse	Common	Frequently	—
3. Carolina Chickadee	Common	Frequently	—
4. Downy Woodpecker	Common	Loves it—Main Dish	—
5. Cardinal	Common	Occasionally	—
6. Starling	Common	If permitted	Pers Non Grata
7. Blue Jay	Occasional	If permitted	Pers Non Grata
8. White-throated Sparrow	Common	Frequently	—
9. House Sparrow	Rare	Unknown	Pers Non Grata
10. Slate-colored Junco	Common	Occasionally	—
11. Red-bellied Woodpecker	Common	Loves it—Main Dish	"Crown Prince"
12. Purple Finch	Occasional	No	PNG en masse
13. Mockingbird	Common	Frequently	—
14. Black-capped Chickadee	Rare	Unknown	One stray
15. Purple Grackle	Occasional	If permitted	Pers Non Grata
16. Cowbird	Rare	Unknown	Pers Non Grata
17. Chipping Sparrow	Rare	Unknown	Spring migrant
18. Carolina Wren	Common	Frequently	—
19. Hairy Woodpecker	Common	Loves it—Main Dish	—
20. Myrtle Warbler	Occasional	Frequently	Winter visitor
21. Brown Creeper	Rare	Unknown	—
22. Rock Dove	Rare	If permitted	PNG—too big
23. Evening Grosbeak	Common	No	PNG en masse
24. Field Sparrow	Occasional	Occasionally	—
25. Flying Squirrel	Common	Loves it	Night raider

Bird
of the
Month:

By DR. J. J. MURRAY
Lexington



Lark
Bunting

IT has been the usual practice in this column to treat of the more common birds, since these are the birds that are seen and recognized by more people. This time, however, we deal with a bird which is among the rarer birds on our Virginia list.

The lark bunting is so rare this far east that it has only occurred in the eastern United States, so far as this writer knows, in Massachusetts, Long Island, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina. Because of its rarity in this part of the country, the bird was collected, made into a skin, and deposited in the United States National Museum.

The adult male is easily recognized. He is slightly larger than our common song sparrow. In summer he is largely black, with a white wing patch and white tips on the inner webs of the tail feathers. The female looks like a streaked sparrow but the tail is tipped like that of the male. In winter plumage the male is so much like the female that it is not possible to distinguish the sex in the field. In fact, in this case it was not possible for the writer to distinguish the sex even in skinning the bird. Dr. Herbert Friedmann examined the bird and confirmed the identification. He wrote that judging by the hardness of the skull the bird was an adult.

The lark bunting is common along the roads in the West. Dr. Edward Howe Forbush, in his invaluable three volume work, *Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*, writes that "The Lark Bunting is a characteristic bird of the great western plains," but "a mere straggler to the Atlantic sea-coast." In crossing the western plains I have seen countless flocks of these striking little birds.

The song is a lovely one. Some of the notes are like those of our yellow-breasted chat, with sweet trills, sometimes interspersed with harsher sounds. At times it has notes like those of the bobolink, but the song is very varied. As one crosses the plains, almost every fourth or fifth fence post has in the early morning a singing bird.

The nest is on the ground, usually sunk a bit below the grass level. It is made of grass and fine rootlets and well lined. Four or five eggs, colored like the eggs of the blue-bird, are laid.

The food consists of the seeds of weed pests, of grasshoppers and injurious insects, which much more than balances the small damage it sometimes does to growing grain.



Edited by HARRY GILLAM

Two Spring Turkeys, One a Freak



State Trooper W. M. Faulconer of Mt. Jackson bagged this rare three-bearded turkey near Bayse during the spring gobbler season. The 13 pound bird had one five-inch beard, plus two 2 inch beards. It was Faulconer's second gobbler within a week and he bagged both within a 200 yard radius.



H. F. Quarles of Buchanan, a retired *Virginia Wildlife* supporter and subscriber, also bagged two turkeys during the 1969 spring season. The biggest one shown in this photo weighed 19 pounds 4 ounces. Both were killed near Jennings Creek.

8,206 Arrested for Breach of Game, Fish, Boat Laws

Virginia game wardens arrested 8,206 persons for violation of the state game, fish and boat laws during the past fiscal year. Arrests for game law violations accounted for 3,367 of the total. Violations of the fish laws prompted 3,747 arrests, down somewhat from the previous year. Some 1,092 persons were apprehended for boat law violations. Virginia game wardens inspected 47,604 boaters, 166,465 fishermen and 80,210 hunters.

Trespass was the most common game law violation, followed closely by hunting without a license. Hunting after hours or during the closed season was the most common violation of the migratory bird laws. Fishing without a license was by far the most common violation of the fishing laws, accounting for 2,268 of the total cases. Fishing trespass was also an important category of violation. Not having the required life preservers or the certificate of number on board accounted for most of the boat law violations.

Game wardens spent a total of 336,994 hours carrying out their varied duties, including enforcement, game and fish management and public relations. They traveled over 3 1/4 million miles by road and 121,319 miles by boat. Fines and costs assessed during the year totalled \$180,217 and \$5,923 was collected for replacement of wildlife taken illegally. In five of the six districts analyzed in more detail, wardens made 338 talks and showed 334 Game Commission movies during the year.

A total of 218 persons had their hunting and fishing licenses revoked. Wardens confiscated 34 guns, 1 car, 2 spotlights plus ammo and other items of equipment. In addition to the main sources of violation already mentioned, hunters frequently ran afoul of the law by using unplugged guns, hunting out of season, spotlighting and exceeding the bag limit. Fishermen were caught most often exceeding the creel limit, using illegal nets and devices, or violating the size limits. Boaters frequently did not have their number properly displayed, ignored waterway markers and operated improperly equipped boats. A number of arrests were made for littering the state's water courses.

20 Graduate from Hunter Safety School

Twenty Hunter Safety instructors were graduated from a recent school in Richmond conducted by Game Commission Safety Officer J. N. Kerrick and J. W. Courtney of West Point under the sponsorship of the Game Commission and the Virginia State Rifle and Revolver

Association. In addition, nineteen of those in attendance were certified as NRA Rifle Instructors during the special dual course. The Hanover Rifle and Pistol Club, the Chesterfield Small Arms Club, The Cavalier Rifle and Pistol Club and the Colonial Heights School Junior Rifle Club all sent representatives to the course for training.

Wildlife Picture Series Offered

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has just announced its "Wildlife Portrait Series No. 1," a series of 10 wildlife pictures produced from original color transparencies in 17" x 14" size. Included in the set are the avocet, white ibis, trumpeter swan, chachalaca, sandhill crane, desert bighorn, pintail duck, black footed ferret, pronghorn antelope, and the American bison. The full color prints suitable for framing, decorating and educational exhibits may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402, for \$2 per set plus postage.

Wrong Address

The Virginia Gun Owners and Sportsmen Alliance, mentioned in the August "Drumming Log," called our attention to the fact that the address given was incorrect. Their correct address is P. O. Box 994, Staunton, Virginia 22401

Beautiful Rack



This beautifully proportioned rack is on a buck bagged by Wilfred Gill of Richmond while hunting with the Sportsman's Club of Bowling Green in Caroline County. The well balanced antlers measured 21 inches in beam spread, 19 inches point to point with lengths of 24 and 25 inches for the left and right beams respectively.



Edited by ANN PILCHER
Rick, THOR, and Snoopy



A trapper friend brought Richmonder Rick Lewis (13) a young sparrow hawk this summer. Delighted with his gift, Rick acquired a falconry permit, at cost of \$5 per year, to hold and train THOR. Through the use of a leash attached to jesses on the bird's legs, Thor has learned to return to his owner from a considerable distance.

Son of Game Commission Fiscal Division employee Pat Lewis, Rick, a 7th grader, is a rock collector, motorcyclist, and former tropical fish raiser.

IWL Convention Spotlights Youth's Thoughts on Conservation

A dialogue with youth on the subject of conservation was one of the outstanding features of The Izaak Walton League's 47th National Convention.

Here are some highlights of the young guests' ideas and suggestions:

- If we can send a man to the moon, we can take the trash out of our rivers.
- Built-in idealism exists among young people in the U.S. today. They are more than willing to work for a cause they feel worth while.
- The generation gap is over emphasized. There is probably as large a gap between any two adults as between an adult and a young person.
- Let youth take part in making decisions for the world they will have to face. Young people want to be part of organizations, such as IWLA, and not cut off from the main stream in separate chapters. They also want to be heard, and to be given important responsibilities toward which they can work and of which they can be proud.

Wildlife Slogan Contest Winners

Messrs. Earl Grove (left) and Asbury N. Smith, members of the Lovettsville Game Protective Association, present checks to the winners of last spring's slogan contest sponsored by the Association and the Virginia Wildlife Federation. The youngsters are (left to right) J. D. Biller, third place; Linda Whalen, second; and Carl Neikirk, who won first place with his slogan, "The Wildlife You Save Are Nature's Own—Let's Protect Them and Their Home." The three were among 17 who entered the contest. Prizes were in amounts of \$10, \$5, and \$2.50. *The Loudoun Times-Mirror staff photo*

Above left: Thor poses proudly on his favorite perch while Snoopy the cat claims his share of Rick's time and affection. Below: Thor begins to part his young master's hair.

Photos by Steve Csaky



Which One's the Biggest?

Brothers Bishop (left) and James Stearn seem to be contesting top honors following the 2-hour fishing rodeo sponsored August 2 by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Izaak Walton League at Polaris Farm on Hydraulic Road in the Charlottesville area. The 127 entrants, ages 6-14, caught 378 fish. Actually, Bishop and James' bluegills each weighed 1-1/4 pounds and together they walked away with the Keller and George Ben Jarman grand prize trophy for the largest fish.

Charlottesville Daily Progress photo by Bob Wimer



SPEAKING OF CONTESTS, 5TH—12TH GRADERS, WE HOPE YOU'RE PLANNING TO COMPETE IN THIS YEAR'S WILDLIFE ESSAY CONTEST.

Cleanup Drive a Success

Pitching in with a will last July, prior to devastating flood waters which came in August, Boy Scout Troop 33 helped Albemarle Chapter, Izaak Walton League members and other interested citizens gather up seven truckloads of empty beer cans, cigarette packs, candy wrappers, empty fish bait boxes and similar trash, to clear the Rivanna Reservoir of the mess left by litterbugs. The 500-acre reservoir, which affords fishing, boating and picnicking opportunities, had been threatened with closure as a public recreation area because of refuse being discarded around a water supply instead of being placed in the numerous trash containers on the area.

Other Virginia Fishin'

Some noteworthy largemouth catches by young anglers: Kenny Proffitt, 14, Buford Junior High student in Charlottesville—8 lb. 7 oz. (citation size), 24 inches long, taken on purple worm from private Albemarle County lake. Gregory Harrison, 9, of Franklin Heights—6 lb., taken on minnow bait in the Chickahominy River near Williamsburg. Henry "Chip" Kiser III, 8, of Roanoke—5 lb. "plus," on black plastic worm from Smith Mountain Lake, a 7:30 p.m. catch. Gary Arnold, 13, of Newport News—a string of largemouths (largest, 4-1/2 lbs.), taken on plastic worm lure at Diascund Creek Reservoir, near Newport News.

And a *carp* for a pint-size fisherman: Billy Atwell, 6, Harrisonburg—9 pounder, from the South Fork of the Shenandoah near Grottoes.



Edited by JIM KERRICK

Boating Thefts

The rate of marine thefts is doubling and a rise in pleasure boat "piracy" has hit the country. There is also an increase in the theft of boating equipment such as radar, radio-telephone, fishing equipment and other equipment necessary for safe boating.

At the present time the insurance companies are taking the loss, but the picture is changing and the ultimate losers will be the boat owners.

The U. S. Coast Guard has been gathering statistical information on the stolen boat problem since early 1968 with a view toward ultimately proposing to the Justice Department that they sponsor legislation which will make the interstate transportation of stolen boats, equipment, or the theft of boats or equipment on the navigable waters on which the U. S. exercises jurisdiction, a federal crime.

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators has proposed that all motorboats be numbered. The Coast Guard also wants all motorboats numbered. This will be helpful in locating lost boats, but stolen boats need something more positive.

The National Crime Information Center set up by the F.B.I. is a computerized index and communications hookup. It is for the handling of information about items stolen throughout the country. It is a technological compendium that matches up descriptions in micro seconds. The National Crime Information and its statewide systems have been in service since early 1967.

The F.B.I. is going to make NCIC available to the marine community through the various state and local enforcement agencies. This is why a permanent and uniform identification system is needed.

Not only boats will be able to be retrieved, but other recreational equipment as well. NCIC will help the boating public once the state and local authorities are ready to codify the information and the industry comes up with a new type of identification system.

Boaters should record the serial numbers of their motors and identifying numbers of all equipment in case a theft occurs. In addition, a photograph could be a great advantage for identification.

The best insurance is not leaving your equipment unguarded.

Two New Macertor/Chlorinators Available; Should Meet Standards

The Boating Anti-Pollution Council has announced that a pair of new macertor/chlorinators—one from the Carlson Division of Koehler-Dayton (a subsidiary of New Britain Machine Corp.) and the second from the Wilcox-Crittenden Division of North and Judd (a subsidiary of Gulf & Western) have been introduced, and are expected to meet the effluent requirements of the American Boat & Yacht Council, the National Sanitation Foundation and of the model law drafted by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

Unconventional Craft

Many unconventional engine propelled watercraft are plying the waters of Virginia today. These craft are sometimes referred to as "Thrill Craft" and include motorized surfboard, hydro carts, flying boats, self-propelled skis and sport submarines.

Watercraft propelled by machinery of 10 horsepower or more, must comply with Virginia numbering requirements and all boats propelled by machinery must comply with all safety requirements.

Barometer Tells Story

Weather is unpredictable as most boatmen know all too well. A sunny day can turn into a torrential downpour without much notice.

And despite our advanced technology, weather forecasting is still a chancy business. Some boatmen would prefer to

go by their own theories about the red sky at night than take the word of the weatherman.

Besides theories, the boating enthusiast should look to the barometer reading before he packs up his gear for a day's outing. If the barometer reading is falling or rising, chances are there will be a change in the weather within 12 to 24 hours. A change in the wind direction or movement of a front will also affect the weather conditions.

Here are a few barometer facts which should be common knowledge among all boatmen.

1. If the wind is in the easterly quadrant and the barometer is falling, bad weather is on its way.
2. If the wind is shifting to the westward and the barometer is rising, clearing and fair weather is in store.
3. A steady but slowly rising barometer means the weather has settled.
4. Unsettled or wet weather is indicated by a steady but slowly falling barometer.
5. When the barometer rises rapidly, it usually means clear but windy weather.
6. If the barometer falls rapidly, head for shore. Chances are a storm is approaching.

Overloading Can Be Fatal

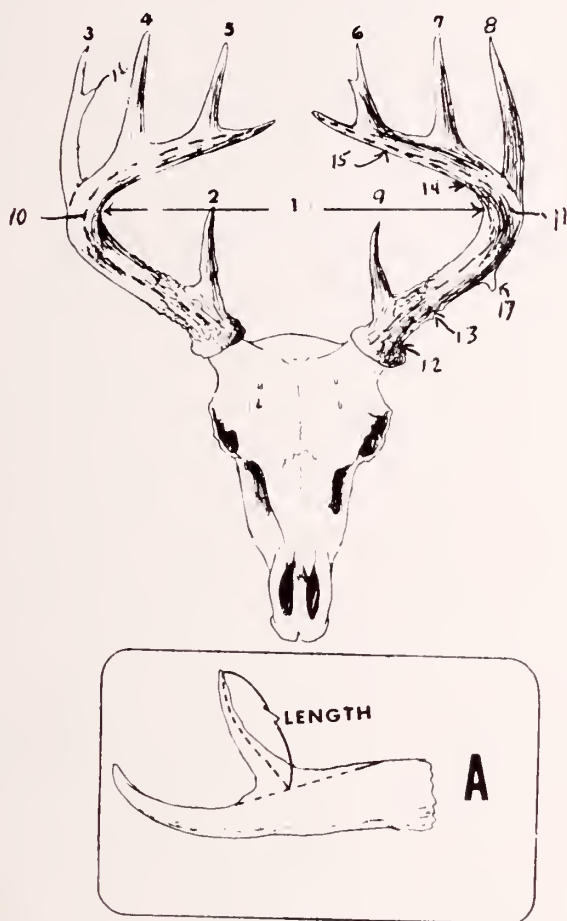
Overloading is one of the most common and potentially fatal mistakes a boat owner can make. Many serious accidents are the result of overloading.

A small boat may have a seating capacity for seven passengers, but this doesn't mean that the boat can safely carry that number. Don't count the seats. Know the boat's passenger weight capacity.

Most reputable boat builders give this information on capacity plates affixed to the gunwale. When figuring total weight, remember to include any gear.

If your boat doesn't have a capacity plate, check with your marine dealer or write the manufacturer. Don't take chances by guessing.

How Does That Trophy Rate?



EACH year there are a number of impressive deer heads that are not entered in the State Trophy Contest because the persons who killed them feel they will surely be nosed out by a larger specimen. Consequently, one or more divisions are won by mediocre heads when larger racks are known to have been killed. In a true contest it is impossible to set up minimums for entry because average quality and number of entries varies markedly from year to year. The following procedure is recommended as a rough test for a prospective entry but is by no means intended to discourage entry of heads which do not measure up to these standards. All heads must be measured by an official measurer at the contest for final score.

To estimate the score of your head, add together (all measurements to nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ inch) the spread of the main beams (1) plus the number of points plus the length of all points and random prongs (2-9, 16 and 17—See insert A) plus the length of both main beams (10 & 11) and the circumference of both antlers at the burr and between all points (12-15). After totaling all these measurements and counts, subtract half the length of all abnormal points (such as 16 & 17) and one-half the difference between corresponding length and circumference measurements on one antler and those on the other.

If the rack scores 225 or better, have it officially measured for Boone and Crockett competition. (Max M. Carpenter, Route 1, Dayton, Virginia, is official measurer.) If it has 9 or more points and scores 150 or over, or if it has 7-8 points and scores 100 or over, or if it has 6 or less points and scores 50 or over, it has a good chance of placing in the Game Commission's Big Game Trophy Contest.

The contest was started in 1941 and has been held annually since. Heads are first judged in regional competition at Harrisonburg or Newport News. The state contest is held in conjunction with one of the regional events alternating between eastern and western sites. Heads must be killed during the previous season to be eligible and the entrant must furnish the Big Game tag or an affidavit from the game warden certifying the entry as a legal kill.

State Big Game Trophy



- There are no advance entry forms. Heads or antlers must be carried or shipped to the proper regional contest where they will be officially measured and entered. Bear skulls only need to be entered in state contest.
- Prizes for regional winners
- Trophies for first place State winners in each Division
- plus Honorable Mention Certificates

Contest

The east-west regional dividing line will follow the east-west deer season line in effect the year the entry was killed.

WESTERN REGIONAL CONTEST

October 16, 17, 18
Fair Grounds
Harrisonburg, Virginia

For entry details contact
Kermit Dovell
955 South High Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia
(Phone 434-3272)

Sponsored by the
Harrisonburg-Rockingham
County Izaak Walton League

STATE CONTEST

October 25
Deer Park Elementary School
Route 17 and Jefferson Avenue
Newport News, Virginia

Virginia
Commission of Game and
Inland Fisheries

Only animals first entered
in regional competition are
eligible

EASTERN REGIONAL CONTEST

October 25
Deer Park Elementary School
Route 17 and Jefferson Avenue
Newport News, Virginia

For entry details contact
E. N. Vandebree
41 Sinton Road
Newport News, Virginia
(Phone 596-4105)

Sponsored by the
Peninsula Sportsmen's Assn.



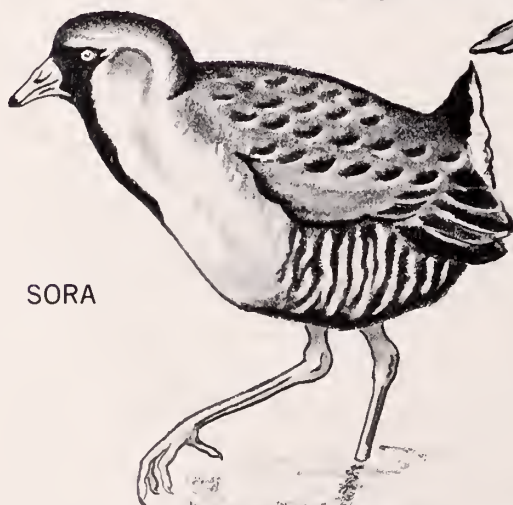
CLAPPER RAIL

KING RAIL

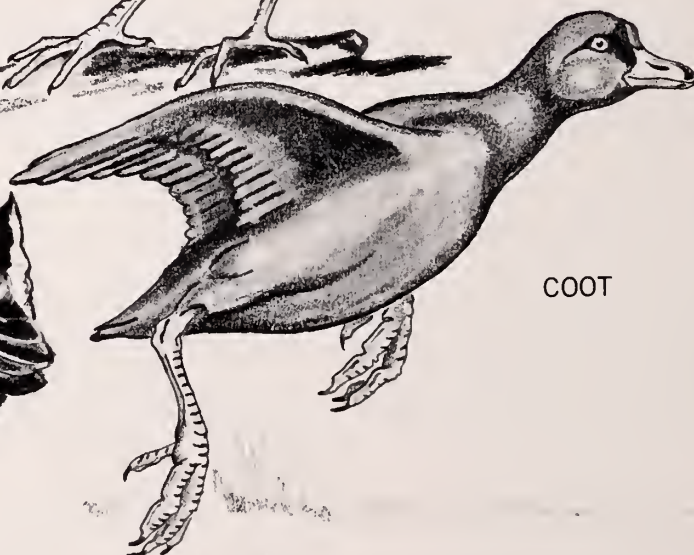
Wetland Game Birds



VIRGINIA RAIL



SORA



COOT

WADE WALKER